


In the Abstract

Please amend the abstract as indicated below.

 [Apparatus for automatically stuffing tubular food casing with food product. The apparatus includes a stuffing horn through which food product flows into tubular food casing which is deshirred from a shirred food casing stick on the stuffing horn. An input end of the stuffing horn is interconnected with a pressurized source of food product.] A clipping device is provided for closing stuffed food casing with a clip and an apparatus is [preferably] provided for causing a tape, holding string loops, to be directed toward the clipping device for closing an end of the food casing so that a string loop is transferred directly from the tape into an entry into a channel in the clipping device, [so that when the end of the food casing is closed with the clip,]. [t]The clip draws the loop to the casing and holds the loop to the food casing. The stuffing apparatus preferably also includes a novel readily cleanable food flow cut-off valve. [The clipping device is preferably of sufficiently light weight and is driven by a sufficient power source to obtain a clipping cycle time of less than 3 seconds.] A punch and clip anvil is [preferably] provided to apply clips bent around the casing in essentially mirror image helices. An extending and retracting conveyor is [desirably] provided to remove stuffed food product from the vicinity of the clipping device after stuffed food casing is closed. [The invention also includes the method for automatically stuffing food casing using the apparatus.]
